United Nations A/C.5/72/SR.34

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 May 2018

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 29 March 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

Contents

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Agenda item 142: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*)

Agenda item 134: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-second session of the General Assembly

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

18-05071 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (A/C.5/72/L.27)

Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.27: Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

1. *Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.27 was adopted.*

Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (A/C.5/72/L.28)

Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.28: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.28 was adopted.*

Agenda item 142: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) (A/C.5/72/L.26)

Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.26: Joint Inspection Unit

3. Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.26 was adopted.

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*) (A/C.5/72/L.25)

Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.25: Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch

4. *Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.25 was adopted.*

Agenda item 134: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/72/L.29)

Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.29: Questions deferred for future consideration

5. *Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.29 was adopted.*

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-second session of the General Assembly

6. **Mr. Ahmed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was pleased that the Committee had completed its programme of work within the time frame allotted. The constructive attitude of all the delegations had enabled the Committee to take decisions on several key agenda items. The Group was particularly pleased with the outcome of the consultations on the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the standards of accommodation for air travel.

7. Noting the heavy workload facing the Committee in the second part of the resumed seventy-second session, he said that the Group would continue to work with the Bureau and all delegations in a pragmatic, constructive and flexible manner. The Group had full confidence in the commitment of all stakeholders to delivering the necessary documents on time, to enable the Committee to complete its work within the time frame allotted.

8. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union) said that while the Bureau, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Secretariat should be commended for the timely issuance of documentation for the first part of the resumed session, the working methods of the Fifth Committee must be improved to ensure more rational use of meeting time. Given the heavy workload for the second part of the resumed session, preparations should start at once and the preparedness of documentation should be monitored closely.

9. While consensus had been reached on several important agenda items and a resolution had been adopted that eliminated the use of first-class travel for all United Nations staff, the Committee had failed to do the same for non-staff. He encouraged members of the International Court of Justice to refrain from travelling first class. Efficient management of air travel was an important element of the reform process.

10. However, there were issues on which no consensus had been reached. Once again, the Committee had failed to agree on the use of the contingency fund; he called for established budgetary processes to be followed more closely. The European Union also regretted the continued lack of consensus on the proposed regional restructuring of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), particularly as the restructuring was limited in scope, cost-neutral and of a purely administrative nature. He recalled that the Committee was a technical body and regretted the politicization of the issue.

11. **Mr. Vachon** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that Australia, Canada and New Zealand wished to echo the views expressed by the Observer for the European Union. While the Fifth Committee Bureau had been right to reduce the length of the first part of the resumed session in the light of the small number of agenda items, the full programme of work should have been adopted and initiated expeditiously. The two weeks of conference services not used by the Committee for the first part of the resumed session should be made available for the second part of the resumed session, given the anticipated heavy

workload. In the more flexible, efficient and effective United Nations of the future, it should be within the purview of the Secretary-General to move resources to where they could best accomplish their mandates, free of the micromanagement and politicization that had become the trademarks of the Committee.

12. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that the Committee had taken action to support financial discipline within the Organization while also addressing priority issues, such as the fight against tuberculosis. The elimination of first-class travel for United Nations staff was a positive example of the Committee exercising its authority to effect sensible policy change. Inefficient and ineffective policies damaged the credibility and operations of the United Nations and could result in the misuse of resources. While the Committee had been unable to reach an agreement on standards of accommodation for air travel for non-staff, draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.28 did encourage non-staff, which included the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and International Court of Justice judges, to downgrade voluntarily to business class.

13. By calling for increased coordination among the Organization's oversight bodies and highlighting the importance of the timely consideration and implementation of JIU recommendations, the Committee had reaffirmed its commitment to oversight of the United Nations system. The effective functioning of oversight bodies enhanced the Organization's transparency and accountability frameworks.

14. The Committee had delayed the opportunity to improve the ability of OHCHR to promote and protect human rights. The United States remained supportive of the cost-neutral restructuring proposal and looked forward to discussing the substantive aspects of the proposal in the future, with a view to advancing the important work of OHCHR.

15. **Mr. Imada** (Japan), commending the constructive engagement and flexibility demonstrated by all delegations, said that the Committee had been able to reach agreement on a number of items despite difficult discussion, which was evidence that the United Nations was able to deliver necessary changes in its working culture. He highlighted the agreement reached regarding the rationalization of the use of travel resources, in particular the decision to eliminate the use of first-class travel for United Nations staff. His delegation believed that was the first step towards wider reforms aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations.

16. **Mr. Fu** Daopeng (China) said that the achievement of a degree of consensus on standards of accommodation for air travel was a milestone. He commended the spirit of consultation and cooperation demonstrated by States throughout the consultations and expressed the hope that the Committee would continue to adapt to new challenges and become more effective.

17. To enable the Committee to deliver on its mandate, its activities must comply with rules and procedures. The issue of delays in the submission and distribution of documents had been a recurring theme. The Secretariat must take effective and concrete measures to resolve the issue once and for all. He hoped that documentation for the second part of the resumed session would be distributed in a timely manner.

18. Consultations must be democratic in nature. Negotiations were not a zero-sum game; all Member States must work together to achieve win-win results and ensure that the Organization's resources were properly managed.

19. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was pleased with the outcome of the first part of the resumed session. All decisions had been made by consensus, which was a principle that his delegation supported. He trusted that the use of consensus decision-making would continue in the second part of the resumed session. Echoing the comments made by several other delegations, he said that documents to be considered during the second part of the resumed session must be distributed in a timely manner, to ensure that the Committee could complete its programme of work within the time frame allotted.

20. **The Chair** said that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.